**Self-Actualization for Females**

I love what Thomas Sergiovanni says about leadership ("Why We Should Seek Substitutes for Leadership," February 1992), but these words keep rolling over and over in my mind: "Maslow's self-actualization theory does not resonate well with the female experience." It may not, but does my female experience negate the need for self-actualization? I contend self-actualization is very important to females.

Women have been socialized to be community builders in their leadership roles. Where they have had difficulty is in taking the limelight. Because they graciously allow others to accept the accolades while they shoulder the responsibility, their efforts go unrecognized. This has cost them dearly. At the same time, when women build self-esteem and encourage the self-actualization of others, what they give comes back to them multiplied in the satisfaction of those successful others.

Is an unassuming, empowering kind of leadership (long associated with women) desperately needed in schools today? Yes, if we are talking about leaders who can let teachers, who are the ones who daily decide how each child will experience education, take the limelight.

I am encouraged when I see male and female leaders accept the nurturing, intuitive part of their personality as an asset, not a liability. And I am encouraged that it has become safer for women to use more of their female traits in leadership these days.

C. Nancy Crawford
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**Cooperative Teams on Target**

"A Tool Kit for Managing Productive Schools" (Karolyn Snyder, Robert H. Anderson, and William L. Johnson, February 1992) is right on target. It's no coincidence that both schools and businesses are restructuring their organizations using cooperative teams.

Both education and business trace the origin of participatory theories to Kurt Lewin, the experimental social psychologist. In the 1940s, Lewin developed the theory that people are likely to modify their behavior when they participate in problem analysis and carry out decisions they help make. Researchers in education and business have found that traditional top-down hierarchical systems compare very poorly in motivation, attitudes, and achievement to more open and democratic systems. The implications for schools and businesses not yet using cooperative teams are significant.

Ed Daniels and Mike Gatto
Smithtown Central School District
Smithtown, New York

**Single-Sex Classes**

Spencer Holland of Morgan State University's Center for Educating African-American Males recently charged an audience at Vanderbilt University to visit an inner-city school to witness the necessity of alternative strategies for addressing the needs of black boys. I took his suggestion.

Before I visited Robert Coleman Elementary School in Baltimore, I was skeptical about the educational and societal benefits of single-sex classes. My biggest concern was the issue of segregation. How could separating at-risk students be beneficial for them or society?

Two things immediately became clear during my visit. One, there are no white students in inner-city schools, so the question of racial segregation was a moot point. Second, though I am black, I didn't know anything about inner cities or the unique and overwhelming problems black males carry into schools every day. Therefore, to stand in judgment of professionals who do know how to meet the needs of their clients is ridiculous.

I received a quick and powerful lesson about the worth of educating the child whose environment is a microcosm of society's ills — death, destruction, and drugs. In Carter Bayton's 2nd grade class, I saw a special group of boys read and respond to what they read, work cooperatively, and be proud. I urge others who need to know about the power of single-sex classes to visit such schools as Robert Coleman Elementary.

B. Joyce Stallworth
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**Experience Doesn't Count in Teaching**

I have read much about attracting retiring aerospace engineers to teaching (Letter to the Editor, December 1991). My response is how on earth can the public expect to attract experienced scientists when they treat experienced teachers as trash.

When engineers change companies, they generally get the same pay or a raise. Not in teaching. Last spring my district, faced with massive cutbacks, released a teacher with 14 years of experience. They hired him back at the last minute, which was fortunate because few other districts would credit him for his full 14 years of experience.

Kings County in California would credit him for 10 years—that was a 20 percent cut in pay. In Kern County a school would have offered him credit for 8 years. Still another district allowed 7 years.
I, despite being department chair, was laid off last year. Why? Because I didn't have tenure. I came to my district with 19 years of experience, including 1 year of junior college teaching. My district refused to recognize any experience before 10 years ago. Since I was out of teaching from 1981 until 1989 to run my own engineering company, I was allowed five years experience on the pay scale! And when layoffs came, the least tenured (not the least experienced) went first.

When we ask why school districts don't grant equivalent years of experience, the answer they give is to "protect our teachers." The implication is that existing staff will wilt under exposure to quality experience. But let's be candid. The real reason is to save the district money.

The public often retorts to teachers who complain about such matters that "you should be dedicated." I want someone to tell me why. You pay doctors $250,000 per year because they hold in their hands people's lives. What do I hold in my hands? All the neighbors' kids.

Society tells teachers to ignore the obvious statement of lack of worth implied by pay scales. My response: You get what you pay for!

Mike Pickett
Los Osos, California

Divine Timing

Educational Leadership had been on my desk for several weeks before I read "Why I Entered Teaching, Why I Stay" (November 1991) while sitting at school trying to catch up on grading and planning. Divine timing! Thanks to Judith Shively for lifting me. She verbalized my love of teaching.

Carolyn Brown
Township High School
Palatine, Illinois

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